



ACHIEVING HARMONY

The First Hope

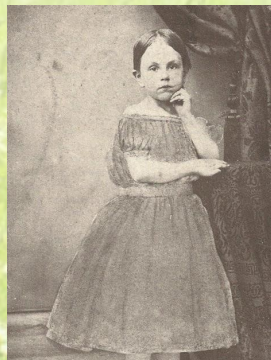
In August, Harmony House will be having the annual Toast of the Vineyard fundraiser, but this year will be quite special. This year, three local sponsors will be recognized for their continuous generosity and goodwill, as they have each reached the \$100,000 or more mark. Those donors are The Christian Fellowship Foundation, OVMC/EORH, and Brothers of the Wheel Motorcycle Club (Northern WV Chapter). To honor this achievement, Harmony House has created the Mary Ellen Wilson Award. This Award, each commemorated in a elegant rainbow of blown glass, will be presented to organizations on the night of the event, August 5, 2016.

For those of you who are not familiar with Mary Ellen Wilson, her story is an important, often under appreciated one. In New York City, 1864, Mary was born to Thomas and Francis Wilson. By age two, her father died and her mother found it necessary to board her while she found and maintained a job. As times were tough and Francis fell deeper into financial purgatory, she was unable to pay Mary Score to care for her daughter. Such was the case, Ms. Score turned Ellen over to New York's Dept. of Charities. The Department illegally placed her with a Thomas and Mary McCormack. Thomas claimed to be her biological father before he died. His widow remarried a man named Francis Connolly. Mary Connolly proved to be very abusive and through the efforts of neighbors and Etta Angell Wheeler, a Methodist Missionary, the abuse came to light. Unfortunately, although New York permitted the state to remove children who were neglected by their caregivers, the authorities were reluctant to intervene. With the assistance of ASPCA founder and NSPCA President Henry Bergh, Elbridge T. Gerry, an ASPCA attorney, would effectively submit the first juvenile removal petition- posing as a census worker to get Mary Ellen's disclosure of abuse and neglect. On April 10, 1874 Mary Ellen was removed and her testimony led to Mary Connolly's one year sentencing for felonious assault on April 21. Although this crime would only claim one year of Mary Connolly's life it claimed something greater from Mary Ellen, her childhood.

Harmony House is proud to dedicate this award as a tribute to Mary Ellen Wilson, with the hope that every child has a happy childhood. Ms. Wheeler would find permanent caregivers for Mary Ellen with her own mother and sister. Mary Ellen lived a long happy life, marrying and having two daughters of her own and fostering a third.

"I have no recollection of ever having been kissed by any one— have never been kissed by mamma. I have never been taken on my mamma's lap and caressed or petted. I never dared to speak to anybody, because if I did I would get whipped.... I do not know for what I was whipped— mamma never said anything to me when she whipped me. I do not want to go back to live with mamma, because she beats me."

-Mary Ellen Wilson. 04/10/1874



Mary Ellen Wilson,
Child Abuse Survivor

What can you do to help prevent child abuse?

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 Jessica Hartley - *Child & Family Advocate*
 Scott Steele - *Senior Forensic Interviewer & Therapist*
 Lisa Musilli - *Forensic Interviewer & Therapist*
 Chanda Paczewski - *Child & Family Therapist*

REPORT ABUSE! >>>

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WEST VIRGINIA
1-800-352-6513

AND BELMONT COUNTY
740-633-5627

"hope has a home"



HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD

Annual fundraiser announced in red carpet fashion...

And the award goes to... Hope! Hope wins big! Fast forward to 10:31 pm on August Fifth and we'll be wrapping up what is guaranteed to be a night to remember. Harmony House, along with key sponsors The Fitzsimmons Foundation and The Christian Fellowship Foundation present this years annual Toast of the Vineyard winetasting. Last years fundraiser played host to well over 200 guests, sampling seventeen different wines from 5 different countries. This year we are truly rolling out the red carpet at River City Restaurant and Bar when we set our event "in black & white" and take a trip back to another time, **Celebrating The Golden Age of Hollywood**. Live auction and chance items will be up for grabs, by donation. Entertainment will be provided by the band Hit Play and you can count on tasty hors d'oeuvres, plenty of dancing, and easier to get into than the Oscars! Tickets are \$60 per person (\$35 tax deductible) and can be purchased on Eventbrite through our web site, at <https://totv2016.eventbrite.com> or by calling Jay Jack at Harmony House, via phone. Cocktail attire is suggested and "Golden Age" costumes are more than appropriate. Break out your inner Clark Gabels and Marilyn Monroes. AUGUST 5, 7pm - 10:30pm. LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



2016 "Hope for Spring" Fling has another successful year!

The West Virginia Auxiliary had their annual Hope for Spring Fling at Oglebay Park's Camp Russell on the evening of April 23rd. The event raised over \$17,000 in event tickets, raffles and auctions. The event sold out of tickets and was actually oversold to make arrangements for guests. Director Leslie Vassilaros was on hand to offer a very poetic and poignant candle vigil in response to those lives harmed by child abuse and neglect. The night continued with excellent food and desserts, good fun and great dancing.



(L to R) Jill Regan, Jane Lambie, Adrienne Klouse, Caroline Beckwith, Laura Ondeck, Julie Joseph, Christy Brandt, Judy Roxby, Christine Carder, Gigi Mercer, and Joanna Merriman. (not pictured Saun Capehart, Cynthia Hubbard, Mary Laska, Kate Monroe, Tammy Patee, Marylon Rahbar, Anne Ricci, Frances Smaltz, Candy Steed, Karri Thomas, and Michelle Wilson.)



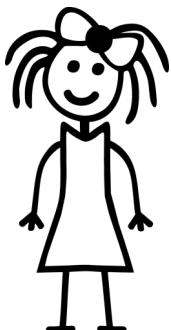
**"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness."
- Eleanor Roosevelt**

2016, so far

Harmony House, between the two centers, has completed 171 forensic interviews. 91 were done in Ohio and the remaining 80 were done in West Virginia.

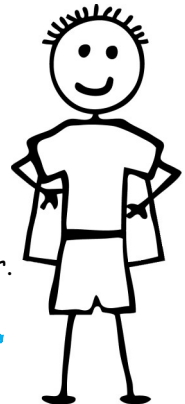
56% of the cases disclosed some form of abuse or neglect. (58% OH & 53% WV)
Harmony House has served 372 kids, 17 adults and 200 family members this year.

**589 Served in 2016 so far. 372 Children.
909 Served in 2015 Total. 531 Children.**



Shouldn't we give them some numbers to look at?

That'd be Super!





A message from the Executive Director - Leslie Vassilaros

Recently I was driving around just enjoying the day. Everything looked so joyful and alive – green grass, blue skies, and flowers in bloom. I pulled my car over to the side of the road and got out. I could now hear the sweet music of the birds. I saw a rabbit run across the field. I took a few minutes just to enjoy the moment and the beauty of the world and life. I took a few minutes to rejuvenate my spirit.

Sometimes at Harmony House, the staff and those wonderful people we collaborate with get so overwhelmed with the ugliness of child abuse that it sometimes feels like that big black cloud is over us and we can't shake it. Sometimes we want to scream, "how many times can a child's trust be broken by someone who should love and protect the child?" Sometimes we have to swallow hard so that the anger, disbelief, and sadness doesn't destroy us. Sometimes we just have to cry. Always we have to accept that we can only do what our profession allows us. There will be times we can't fix every wrong in a child's world even though that is our utmost wish.

So it is a blessing when light and hope can peek through the darkness of child abuse. The Harmony House staff and those we work with try not to get lost in this bleakness but to seek out hope. Harmony House is the place where hope has a home. Here we focus on each child's well-being making sure she or he has the tools and the resources to become whole again – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. With the help of the community we can offer each child and non-offending family members the unique, specialized services of a Children's Advocacy Center, including the services of those we work with - prosecutors, law enforcement, DHHR, Job and Family Services, victim assistance, medical professionals, mental health professionals, and so many others.

I want to take this time to thank each of you for caring about the children Harmony House so humbly serves. We could not exist without your help. Our Harmony House, our Children's Advocacy Center, is truly a gift from our communities to its children. I want to thank all those who help us ensure Harmony House's two centers – St.Clairsville center serving Belmont County and the Wheeling Center serving Ohio and Marshall Counties – just do not continue to exist but to thrive and overflow with hope for these children dealing with allegations of child abuse.

I would like to end by sharing two quotes I have used before but still feel are so important.

"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace." --Kofi Annan

"Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear." -- Nelson Mandela

Once again, thank you for caring and for making a difference in the lives of so many local children!

Warmest Regards,

Leslie 

Empowering Your Family Against Online Predators By Lisa Musilli, MSW, LSW

Did you know that 1 out of every 7 youth Internet users received unwanted sexual solicitations and 1 out of every 25 youths received an online sexual solicitation in which the solicitor tried to make offline contact? Could this be someone you know?

The Internet is a vast source of information for all of us, and naturally some people use that information for good, and some for evil, like grooming and stalking children. The anonymity of the Internet provides the perfect smokescreen for an experienced predator to operate. The predator's knowledge of certain teenage subjects is as accurate as his or her calculated ability to speak teens' online lingo.

Offline, predators have typically operated in isolation. Never before have predators had the opportunity to communicate so freely and directly with each other as they do online. Their communication on the Internet provides validation for their behavior. They share their conquests, real and imagined. They discuss ways to contact and lure children online and exchange tips on seduction techniques, as well as tips on the avoidance of law enforcement detection.

So what things can you as a parent, teacher, or other concerned adult do to protect kids against online predators and solicitation? Communication is key in protecting children from online exploitation. One way to keep children safer is to supervise their online activities or limit their access to sites that can facilitate online interaction with people they don't know and trust in real life. Be aware of popular sites/Apps such as KIK, Instagram, SnapChat, Facebook, YouKnow, Omeagle and Audio Manager. These sites allow predators easy access to talk to and share pictures/videos with your child. If you allow your children access to these sites, you should discuss Internet safety often.

Monitor children's Internet use by asking them what sites they visit and to show you any profiles they may have posted online. Encourage your kids to trust their guts if they have suspicions. Empower them to tell you if they feel threatened by someone or uncomfortable because of something online. You can then help them report concerns to the police and to the social networking site. Most of these sites have links for users to report abusive, suspicious, or inappropriate behavior.

Check out <http://www.OnGuardOnline.gov> for more information regarding safeguarding your children on the internet. Remember: You have the Power. Communication is Key!





Harmony House
2000 Eoff Street
Wheeling, WV 26003
304-230-2205

66850 Pogue Road
St. Clairsville, OH 43950
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<http://harmonyhousecacwv.org>



If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please email harmonyhousecac@aol.com or call 304-230-2205

Invest in the Lives of children by supporting Harmony House, Children's Advocacy Center

I commit to supporting abused children in my community with a donation of:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| * Friend of children | \$10 - \$49 | Individual |
| * Advocate of Children | \$50 - \$299 | Name: _____ |
| * Protector of Children | \$300 - \$499 | |
| * Guardian of Children | \$500 - \$999 | Business: _____ |
| * Patron of Children | \$1000 - \$2,999 | Address: _____ |
| * Benefactor of Children | \$3000 - \$4,999 | _____ |
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I would like to take advantage of NIP credits (contributions of \$500 or more) if they are still available. ☐

This donation is to honor: _____

This donation is in memory of: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send check to Harmony House, 2000 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003